

EXHIBIT D



IMAGINEAUSTON

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
Vibrant. Livable. Connected

City Council Adopted
June 15, 2012

Amended 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017,
2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to the residents of Austin and Central Texas, as well as over 300 City of Austin employees, whose thoughtful discussions, insights, and ideas provided the basis for the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan*.

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	Library Commission	Zero Waste Advisory Commission
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AMENDMENTS TO IMAGINE AUSTIN

The City Council unanimously adopted Imagine Austin on June 15, 2012. By City Charter, the Planning Commission reviews the comprehensive plan annually and may recommend amendments to Council. The Council has amended the plan as follows:

September 2013 CPA- 2013-0001 - Minor additions and corrections

September 2014 CPA-2014-0001 - Added Digital Inclusion Strategic Plan

CPA-2014-0002 - Amendment to align Imagine Austin with the City endorsed Austin Travis County School Readiness Action Plan

CPA-2014-0003 - Added Public Safety

CPA-2014-0004 - Removed “Affordable” from Related Vision Components for Priority Program 8 - Revise Austin’s development regulations and processes to promote a compact and connected city (Typographical correction only. Priority Program 6- Household Affordability is a separate Priority Program)

November 2014 Ordinance 20141106-085 - Added South Austin Combined Neighborhood Plan

December 2014 Ordinance 20141211-197 - Added Colony Park Master Plan

October 2015 CPA-2015-0001 - Added Vision Zero

CPA-2015-0003 - Corrected Typographical Errors

June 2016 Ordinance 20160616-074 - Added South Central Waterfront Vision Framework Plan

October 2016 CPA-2016-0003 - Added Activity Corridor on Guadalupe Street from 29th Street to 51st Street

CPA-2016-0004 - Added Vision Zero Action Plan

CPA-2016-0005 - Added Age-Friendly Amendments

November 2016 Resolution 20161103-049 - Added Age-Friendly Austin Plan

April 2017 Ordinance 20170413-010 - Added Austin Strategic Housing Blueprint

June 2018 Ordinance 20180614-015 - Added Austin Area Master Community Workforce Plan

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IMAGINE AUS

Chapter One

The Roadmap and The Road Ahead

Describes the need for a comprehensive plan providing a roadmap for Austin to navigate the challenges of the 21st century, core principles for action to achieve a sustainable future, and how we will use those principles to turn the plan into reality. It is useful for those who may not wish to read the plan “cover to cover.”

Chapter Two

Experiencing Austin: Who Are We Today?

Contains information on the current state of Austin and what it means for the city’s future, such as how affordable it is to live here, how people are getting around, and how our parks and services are performing.

Growth Concept Map

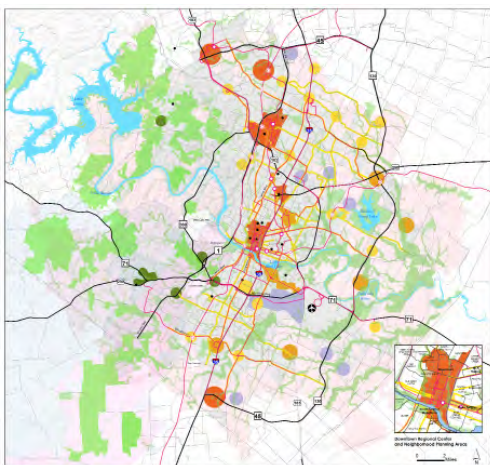
Is the geographic guide for applying the vision to the city’s physical pattern. Created through a public scenario-building process, the Growth Concept Map illustrates priority locations for activity centers, corridors, transportation, open space, and resource preservation.

TIN AT A GLANCE

Chapter Three

Imagining Austin: Our Vision Of a Complete Community

Presents the *Imagine Austin* vision statement, developed with the input of thousands of residents. It describes the Austin we aspire to be in 2039, the 200th anniversary of the city's founding. Our city will be one of a "complete communities" that is natural and sustainable, prosperous, livable, mobile and interconnected, educated, creative, and which values and respects all Austinites. The vision statement defines the destination that the plan policies, actions, and programs are designed to reach.



Chapter Four

Shaping Austin: Building The Complete Community

Includes the Growth Concept Map and the plan's policy guide. The plan's policies organized by 7 building blocks (e.g., Land Use and Transportation, Economy). This chapter includes key issues, challenges, and best practice ideas from other communities facing similar challenges.

Chapter Five

Implementation And Measuring Success

Addresses how *Imagine Austin's* vision and framework will be implemented. It identifies eight priority programs based on hundreds of ideas developed by public working groups, provides guidance for decision-making, and defines the ongoing process that will be used to monitor implementation progress.



**AUSTIN
WISHES YOU
SAFE JOURNEY**

WHAT'S IN THE PLAN: IMAGINE AUSTIN AT A GLANCE

The comprehensive plan is organized into five chapters:

Chapter One: The Roadmap and The Road Ahead describes the need for a comprehensive plan providing a roadmap for Austin to navigate the challenges of the 21st century, core principles for action to achieve a sustainable future, and how we will use those principles to turn the plan into reality. It is useful for those who may not wish to read the plan “cover to cover.”

Chapter Two: Experiencing Austin: Who Are We Today? contains information on the current state of Austin and what it means for the city’s future, such as how affordable it is to live here, how people are getting around, and how our parks and City services are performing.

Chapter Three: Imagining Austin: Our Vision of a Complete Community presents the *Imagine Austin* vision statement, developed with the input of thousands of residents. It describes the Austin we aspire to be in 2039, the 200th anniversary of the city’s founding. Our city will be a city of “complete communities” that is natural and sustainable, prosperous, livable, mobile and interconnected, educated, creative, and that values and respects all Austinites. The vision statement defines the destination that the plan policies, actions, and programs are designed to reach.

Chapter Four: Shaping Austin: Building the Complete Community sets a two-part framework for action to realize our vision of a city of complete communities. The Growth Concept Map shows in general terms where new development over the next 30 years should be located. The building blocks define specific policies to guide decisions on topics ranging from land use and transportation to economy to creativity. The core concepts of *Imagine Austin*—complete communities and compact, connected centers—are two sides of the same coin. These policies are the foundation of the action ideas and programs contained in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five: Implementation and Measuring Success addresses how *Imagine Austin*’s vision and framework will be implemented. It identifies eight priority action programs based on hundreds of ideas developed by public working groups, provides guidance for decision-making, and defines the ongoing process that will be used to monitor implementation progress.



Photo courtesy of Bat Conservation International.

THE ROADMAP AND THE ROAD AHEAD

A Comprehensive Plan for the 21st Century

Thinking Big: The Beauty of a Comprehensive Plan

6 Key Challenges and Opportunities

Securing a Sustainable Future

Imagine Austin Core Principles for Action

The Road Ahead



A Vision for Austin's Future

As it approaches its 200th anniversary, Austin is a beacon of sustainability, social equity, and economic opportunity; where diversity and creativity are celebrated; where community needs and values are recognized; where leadership comes from its citizens and where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible to all.

Austin's greatest asset is its people: passionate about our city, committed to its improvement, and determined to see this vision become a reality.

Through the process of comprehensive planning and the preparation, adoption and implementation of a comprehensive plan, the city intends to preserve, promote, protect and improve the public health, safety, comfort, order, appearance, convenience and general welfare; prevent the overcrowding of land and avoid undue concentration or diffusion of population or land uses; facilitate the adequate and efficient provision of transportation, water, wastewater, schools, parks, recreational facilities, housing and other facilities and services; and conserve, develop, utilize and protect natural resources.

- Article X. Planning; Charter of the City of Austin, Texas



All images: courtesy of City of Austin, unless otherwise noted.

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CHAPTER

THE ROADMAP AND THE ROAD AHEAD

There are two primary choices in life: to accept conditions as they exist, or accept the responsibility for changing them.

- Denis Waitley, author and keynote speaker

A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

Austin today is a model of livability, widely acclaimed as one of the top cities in the country. We have a distinctive and appealing vibe, a resilient economy, a growing national profile, good job and business opportunities, a fun and relaxed way of life, a beautiful natural setting for outdoor living and recreation, a thriving arts and live music scene, and a reasonable cost of living for a big city. In fact, we're so attractive that we draw more than one million visitors and many thousands of new residents annually.

Known as a "smart" city, we are also smart enough to not rest on our laurels. Maintaining our enviable economy and quality of life requires continuous adaptation as the world evolves around us. As a fast-growing city whose population is projected to nearly double over the next three decades, we are becoming more urban and diverse each year. Our attractiveness brings a central challenge: how to accommodate more people, in a considered and sustainable fashion, while preserving what we value so that we get better not just bigger.

Many of the changes Austin has seen are positive. Growth in recent decades has brought more employers and varied job opportunities; more interesting people with whom to meet and connect; a broader population base to support the visual, performing, media, and interactive arts, as well as our many nonprofits; a revitalized downtown; new transportation options; and greater tolerance and diversity. We have gained public parkland, a wealth of entertainment and dining choices, and many other amenities to enjoy with family and friends.



Children playing at Butler Park.

Austin has a true sense of place and culture. To be from Austin means something to people, conjuring images of Barton Springs, music, food, outdoor recreation. . . open-mindedness. It's a little grungy, a little hippie, and a little country all rolled into one.

– *Imagine Austin* Community
Forum Series #1 participant

But other changes are negative. We now suffer from serious traffic congestion, loss of natural and open space to urban sprawl, Central Austin housing that is increasingly unaffordable for individuals and families, a sense of loss about a simpler Austin of the past, and too many low-wage jobs that lag behind Austin's cost of living. Most troubling, at least 20 percent of our children live in poverty, go to bed hungry, go without health insurance and adequate healthcare, and fail to graduate from high school.

The challenge now before us—in shaping the Austin of the 21st century—is to energetically leverage our strengths as we grow, while turning around the negatives. The *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* provides the roadmap.

The stakes are high. We must embrace the future that we want and work to make it happen.

THINKING BIG: THE BEAUTY OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

We are not lacking in the dynamic forces needed to create the future. We live immersed in a sea of energy beyond all comprehension.

– Thomas Berry, cultural historian and Earth scholar

The distinctive benefit of a comprehensive plan is that it confronts big issues in a big-picture way. Other City of Austin plans are more focused and deal with topics such as parks, solid waste, transportation, water, or smaller geographic areas. But only a comprehensive plan fully considers how the whole community's values, needs, people, and places are interrelated and interdependent. In creating this plan, we identified the defining issues that are central to Austin's future success.

Today, Austin tops numerous state, national, and international “Best Of” lists. This visibility is accelerating our attractiveness and population growth. As we grow and evolve, how can we preserve and amplify the special things we value about Austin? How can we face our more difficult problems, improve the city, and meet our challenges head-on?

6 KEY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Preserving Our Livability

Austin is a great place to live. We have a wealth of natural resources and recreational opportunities, friendly neighborhoods, a robust economy, and a thriving arts scene. As we welcome future generations, how can we best expand and share all of these amenities? How can we preserve our character and history, remembering the many different experiences and cultures that have made Austin what it is today? How will we increase housing and transportation choices for different types of individuals and families throughout Austin? How will we keep Austin healthy, safe, beautiful, and affordable?

Expanding Transportation Choices

Austin is a big city, so it's time to build a "big-city" transportation system. We need good roads, and we need to move people around the city and the region conveniently and safely, with or without a car. How can we offer more transportation choices? How can we encourage Austinites to walk, bike and take transit? How can we build the kind of transportation network we'll need for sustainable development?

Tackling the Ethnic Divide

Austinites of color are now the majority and our city is quickly becoming more diverse. Yet we are still dealing with the legacy of segregation and racism. Poverty and people of color both are concentrated east of Interstate 35. Overall, Austinites living east of Interstate 35 are poorer, less healthy, lag academically, and share less equally in Austin's celebrated quality of life. How can we improve their lives while also protecting longtime Eastside residents from displacement? As a city, we want to tackle this divide and close the opportunity gaps. How can we help all Austinites have a voice, material comforts, and a reason to believe in a brighter future?

Protecting Our Natural Resources

Austinites enjoy an easy connection with nature and have a strong environmental ethos. We get out on our trails and greenways, lakes and rivers, parks and natural lands, and consider them a core part of what makes Austin special. But suburban growth is pushing Austin outward and encroaching upon and consuming these resources. How can we protect our waterways and watersheds, other natural resources, and agricultural lands? How can we better connect our community with healthy, natural open spaces? How can we ensure an ample water supply for the Austin of 2050 and beyond?

Promoting Prosperity for All

Austin is an innovation leader, known for its high-tech industries, colleges, and universities; youthful population; attractiveness to creative professionals; support for local independent businesses; and unique music and arts community. We need a strong business climate for large and small businesses. How do we help all Austinites find good jobs in our high-skill economy? How do we ensure that musicians, young families, and hourly workers aren't priced out of Austin? How can we help wage growth catch up to the rising costs of living, closing the affordability gap? How can we expand job opportunities and enhance the skills of our labor force?

Collaborating Regionally

As the biggest city in Central Texas, Austin has a duty to provide regional leadership and invite its regional partners to collaborate on solutions. Issues such as transportation, water resources, growth and development, environmental protection, climate change, and economic prosperity are regional in scale and scope. We need a platform for regional governance and coordinated comprehensive planning for our collective future. How can Austin lead the way to forge a productive dialogue and set of agreements?

ADDRESSING CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Austin is a big, fast-growing 21st century city. We could sit back and simply let change happen, in ways we may or may not like. Or we can energetically shape our own destiny using this plan as a common playbook. By being unified in vision and proactive about solutions, we can capitalize on our strengths, carry forward our values, and channel growth as a positive force.

Change isn't easy. Actively preparing for change and uncertainty can be tough. However, the potential rewards can outweigh the discomforts. Choosing a different path for our city will require doing things differently. Having imagined a better Austin, it is incumbent upon us to realize our vision.

Swimmers and sunbathers enjoying Barton Springs Pool.





The view of Lake Austin from Mount Bonnell.

SECURING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Right now more than 70 percent of the world population is convinced that something serious has to be done about the dangers facing the planet.... Most of humanity wants to know how to make the change. It's one of those tipping-point times where things can change unbelievably fast.

- Paul H. Ray and Sherry Ruth Anderson, coauthors of *The Cultural Creatives: How 50 Million People Are Changing the World*

The Austin City Council established “sustainability” as the central policy direction of the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan*.

Sustainability means considering not only the needs of today, but also whether these needs are being met in ways that conserve resources for future generations. Sustainability means finding a balance among three sets of goals: 1) prosperity and jobs, 2) conservation and the environment, and 3) community health, equity, and cultural vitality. It means taking positive, proactive steps to protect quality of life now and for future generations.

This comprehensive plan focuses on creating a sustainable city. The way Austin has grown for the last 60 years comes at a troubling price in terms of social segregation and isolation, public health, air and water quality, loss of natural open space and agricultural lands, and climate change. Sprawling, low-density development drives up the public costs for roads, water lines, and other infrastructure that must be continually extended to far-flung new development. Austin simply can't afford to ignore the costs associated with the way we've grown. The patterns of the past decades are neither environmentally nor fiscally sustainable.

Growing in accordance with this plan offers us a way to do it better. It offers us more choices for where and how to live. A compact and connected city reduces the distances that people drive between work, shopping, and home. This reduces stress and frees up precious time for more pleasant and meaningful pursuits.

“SunFlowers, an Electric Garden” is a public art gateway to the Mueller community. The sunflowers were designed by Mags Harries and Lajos Heder, of Harries/Heder Collaborative.



As we look to the future and follow this comprehensive plan, we have an important opportunity to be more intentional about the next chapters in Austin’s development. The magnitude of our past and projected population growth, in a time of constrained resources and climate change, could amplify existing problems within Austin and Central Texas. Growth can have tremendous benefits for Austin, but not if we repeat our past actions and continue to incur ever-growing environmental, fiscal, and social costs. That’s why we need to make some changes.

We all want Austin to prosper, innovate, and lead. Toward that end, we must be wise stewards of our natural world and its resources—the original “infrastructure.” This comprehensive plan promotes sustainable and responsible growth and the conservation practices required to protect and enhance Austin’s future.



Image: City of Austin
Office of Sustainability.

SHAPING IMAGINE AUSTIN

Thousands of Austinites shaped *Imagine Austin* throughout the public process. Some key numbers are included here:

18,532 inputs from the community over more than 2 years

4 rounds of public input, including:

- **5** rounds of surveys
- **21** public meetings
- **422** Meetings-in-a-Box distributed
- **57** traveling team events
- **112** speaking events

Each round built on input gathered during the previous round

More than **150 articles and stories** in local media

2,535 email subscribers

2,224 Facebook likes

1,153 Twitter followers

7 building block Working Groups, with **373** participants, **22** meetings, and **2** surveys

38-member Citizens Advisory Task Force, meeting more than **100** times over more than 2 years

Monthly oversight meetings with the Task Force, a committee of the Planning Commission, and a committee of City Council

19 Boards or Commissions briefed twice each

55 stakeholder interviews with key interest groups

5 neighborhood or Contact Team meetings and presentations, plus **1** survey of Contact Teams

Support from more than **300 staff members** across all City departments

See *Appendix B* for more information.



IMAGINE AUSTIN CORE PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION

We cannot seek achievement for ourselves and forget about progress and prosperity for our community.... Our ambitions must be broad enough to include the aspirations and needs of others, for their sakes and for our own.

- Cesar Chavez, labor leader and civil rights activist

Sustainability is the basis of the *Imagine Austin* vision statement and its hundreds of policies and actions developed through the input of thousands of community members. These policies and actions express six core principles for action to make our “imagined” Austin a reality for Austinites of today and tomorrow.

Grow as a compact, connected city

Austin’s long-term sustainability requires a fresh focus on redevelopment and infill within the city’s developed areas. Favoring compact growth presents an alternative direction to earlier decades of sprawling, low-density development. More compact growth contains costs by capitalizing on the land and infrastructure already in place. It also enhances human connections, innovation, and urban vibrancy. Creating a more compact and efficient city is critical to our ability to connect people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities to homes, jobs, schools, arts and cultural amenities, and other destinations with a more complete transportation system that is affordable to build, operate, and maintain.

Integrate nature into the city

A beautiful system of outdoor places for recreation and environmental protection will define Austin as a world-class city. We need to use our creeks, their tributaries and floodplains, Lady Bird Lake, and the Colorado River to create a network of connected greenways and waterways. As we grow into a more compact city, we will also have an increased need for parks and open spaces distributed across these new urban places. By strengthening our “green infrastructure”—parks, the urban forest, urban trails, greenways, rivers, creeks, lakes, gardens, urban agriculture, open spaces, and wildlife habitat and the relationships between them and the rest of the city—Austin can protect the natural environment and enhance recreational opportunities.

Provide paths to prosperity for all

Austin can harness its strong economy to expand opportunity and social equity for all residents. Developing new economic sectors through partnerships between the business community, city government, and institutions will help employ a diverse workforce and expand opportunities for young and old. To ensure our economic strength, it is critical to preserve Austin’s mix of large and small businesses, local entrepreneurs, major employers, clean industries, educational institutions, and government jobs. Growing our economic base should provide jobs and career paths for workers of all education and skill levels. Prosperity for all means reducing the number of people living in poverty by providing workforce training and services to help residents attain living-wage jobs. It also means capitalizing on the city’s creative industries, cultural heritage, and diverse population to position the city as a national and international center for innovation and knowledge-based industries. We can maintain economic resiliency by staying attuned to global trends and emerging technologies and by preparing our children academically and socially to lead Austin’s future.

Develop as an affordable and healthy community

As development and change occurs, we must strive to contain Austin’s cost of living, while increasing wages and the number of good jobs. We must provide high public value with tax dollars to deliver quality, affordable amenities that all Austinites can enjoy. An affordable community can only exist if we make sure that the people who work in Austin — at all income levels — can afford to live here. Through incentives and partnerships, the City of Austin can encourage more affordable housing to be distributed throughout the city. New mixed use areas need to have affordably priced housing, be walkable and bikable, and be linked by transit to jobs and other centers, so residents can choose to avoid the costs of car ownership, matching the needs of Austin’s increasingly diverse households and wooing families back to the city. Healthy communities depend on easy, safe access to walking, biking, and recreation, healthy and nutritious food, quality healthcare, schools, police, and other community services.

Sustainably manage water, energy and other environmental resources

Sustainability is about considering the needs of present and future generations. As a city, we need to respect our natural constraints, mitigate and adapt to climate change, and conserve water, energy, land, and other natural resources. The City will enact public policies and make choices on the basis of long-term costs and consequences. We will also need to develop relationships with our Central Texas neighbors to address these issues on a regional basis. Austin can reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by promoting community health, encouraging walking, biking, and other daily exercise, and making fresh, local food accessible. We have a responsibility to future generations to go even greener, encourage energy independence, reduce individual, household, and commercial water use, and protect clean air and water. By respecting our natural resources, we can build a sustainable foundation for Austin’s enduring prosperity.

Think creatively and work together

Austin’s spirit of creativity most openly manifests itself in our local music and arts scenes and by those engaged in these and other creative enterprises. However, it also transcends Austin’s creative community, to shape our entrepreneurs and businesses, local government, non-profits, and community at large to embody a broader, innovative mindset and approach to solving problems. The challenges of a growing population, finite natural and fiscal resources, and a changing climate will require Austinites and their local government to become ever more resilient. Resilience — the ability to adapt to challenges and change — will be a hallmark of successful communities in the 21st century. Innovation is one of the key attributes of resiliency. Sustaining our culture of creativity and harnessing the collective energy of our people are essential to realizing the future envisioned by *Imagine Austin*.

WITH HOUSING AND SIDEWALKS FOR ALL

As outlined by the vision statement, *Imagine Austin* strives to make our city a place where the necessities of life are affordable and accessible for all current and future Austinites. We hope to convey that amenities, features, and services should be inclusive of the various needs of all Austinites, including children, teens, adults, seniors, families, singles, artists, musicians, teachers, civil servants, small business owners, residents of North, South, East, West, and Central Austin, those with mental or physical disabilities, native Austinites, immigrants, all races and ethnicities, all religions, all cultures, all lifestyles, and all socioeconomic classifications.

Throughout the plan, you will find that many policies and actions call for anticipated or desired services and infrastructure such as affordable housing, accessible sidewalks, and a connected network of trails, parks, and open space. What you will not often find is a mention of specific groups or segments of the community identified as targeted recipients of such benefits. We have done this deliberately because we recognize that these gaps in service and infrastructure provision affect a large swath of the community and should be made available to all those in need, whether they belong to a specified profession, demographic group, income bracket or not.

THE ROAD AHEAD

We meet tonight at a crossroads, a point of decision. Shall we expand, be inclusive, find unity and power; or suffer division and impotence.

— Jesse Jackson, civil rights activist and author of “Common Ground and Common Sense”

The *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* provides a platform for moving forward. It clearly defines where we are today and where we want to go. It provides policies and actions for each building block of the plan. It contains a wealth of community-defined priorities for sustainability, livability, mobility, equity, and prosperity. Now, Austinites and their city government must work collaboratively to make the plan bear fruit. Four action steps are required as we move forward:

Get to work

Austinites are united by their desire to see the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* yield results. We all want to see completed projects that make Austin better. In adopting this plan, the City of Austin is inviting everyone — residents, local companies and business groups, philanthropists and nonprofits, governmental agencies, and others — to partner with it to realize the plan. A collaborative commitment is essential. The action plan must start strong and be sustained in the years ahead.

Set priorities

The Austin of our dreams won’t be built in a day. This plan contains hundreds of transformational ideas for our future. From these, we must prioritize an achievable handful at a time and successfully execute them. Seeing visible results steadily emerge from this comprehensive plan will be important. Which goals within the plan most merit our immediate attention and can be translated into relatively quick, inspiring wins? How can public-private partnerships advance big, exciting projects that achieve multiple objectives at once?

Agree to work together

The greatest benefit of a comprehensive plan is that it is a single playbook from which everyone works. We can accomplish far more by pulling in the same direction. The *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* sets the stage for a new era defined by advancing common objectives. When challenging issues and choices arise, the plan guides both the municipality and the community in thinking about the good of the whole.

Leadership will be important moving forward. The plan needs leaders — within the community and city government — who are committed to realizing its potential and power, and are skilled at the coalition-building required to move forward together.

Commit to action

The *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* lays a strong foundation for taking action. Grounded in community values and needs, it has been crafted to positively shape Austin over the next five to 30 years. But its impact will only be as strong as the actions and programs that Austinites undertake to realize it.

The City Charter requires that elected officials and city government use the comprehensive plan as a guide for policies and practices, including budgeting. The City of Austin is already committed to action, as it references this long-term plan to set annual budget, program, and project priorities. But the aspirations of the comprehensive plan are far bigger and deeper than what municipal government can accomplish alone. To fully realize the community benefits it outlines, visionary individuals, groups, agencies, and plans will also need to commit to action. The whole community must sustain the work that enacts the plan, through projects small and large.

Set priorities. Tackle transformational projects. Repeat.

Act for the whole

The comprehensive plan challenges us to look beyond our personal interests and act for the good of the whole. To think of the entire pie, not just our slice. To be good stewards for generations to come. To understand single elements—parks, transportation, water, housing—within the context of a larger system. To remember and protect those who lack a voice, money, and power.

When we think long-term and work to make the city as a whole better, everyone stands to benefit.

Think big-picture

Considering Austin as a whole means seeing all of its different pieces and identities and how they all fit together. We must understand Austin on a number of levels: as a collection of distinctive, yet interconnected neighborhoods; as an educational and technological innovator; as a system of homes and jobs that need to be connected by more transportation choices; and as a government center, an expanding creative hub, and economic heart of Central Texas.

Comprehensive thinking requires that we consider small areas in the context of how they fit together and how they fit into the whole. Reading this plan in full creates the opportunity to understand what the whole is. As Austin continues to grow, it will take a big-picture view to bring everything together.

Think holistically

This comprehensive plan is holistic in its consideration of big themes like livability, sustainability, and complete communities. In addition to planning for land use, transportation, and other physical issues, it considers the provision of services, economic development, cultural needs, public health, resource efficiency, and equity. It provides a framework for how the physical, economic, and social pieces of the city and the region interconnect.

Think of the less fortunate

The faces and voices of Austin are varied and grow more diverse each day. Social and economic gaps are widening between many segments of our population. Austinites are compassionate; we hope to bring everyone along as we move ahead into a bright future. This comprehensive plan provides direction for actions that will benefit not just a fortunate few, but all Austinites.

Expand the growth-shaping toolkit

Pair regulatory tools with this plan

This comprehensive plan defines what Austinites want and how that can be realized.

Redevelopment is a primary tool to advance many of the plan's goals. In that sense, the plan serves as a counterpoint to many governmental regulations, which often focus on prohibiting things we don't want. Updated comprehensive plans typically need to be supported with updated land use regulations. We can respect property rights, while also making it easier to "do the right thing." We will also need land use regulations that make it easier and more cost effective to develop sustainably and create compact and walkable places.

Use both zoning and incentives

Zoning is an important tool to guide land use, but it is best used in combination with other tools and a realistic understanding of market forces. New approaches that utilize both zoning and incentives are needed to implement this plan. By offering incentives in the form of grants, loans, infrastructure investments, or innovative regulatory approaches, Austin can encourage good projects that deliver numerous community benefits. These benefits can include affordable housing, great design that beautifies our city and creates lively public places, operational improvements, more transportation options, pocket parks, low-impact development, new jobs, an expanded tax base, and so on. Incentives matter to people who want to improve our community, and they can generate goodwill while helping us reach our goals.

Look to peer cities

Austin appears on many national and even international "Best Of" lists. In these rankings, our closest peers are other resilient, progressive, large cities. All are having similar debates about growth, resource conservation, linking jobs and homes with expanded transportation choices, and preserving community character. We're in a class with the most innovative of our peers. However, Austin is growing much faster than many long-established cities. As we seek to maintain and improve Austin's position as a sustainable, "most livable" city, we can greatly benefit by studying and sharing best practices with peer cities around the nation and the world.

Focus on urban design

In the past, Austin development debates were often simplistically framed as developers versus neighborhoods or the environment. Increasingly, we have a more sophisticated understanding. Sustainability requires redeveloping the central city in "green" ways that advance multiple environmental, economic, and community goals. Well-designed new development can create community amenities and make the city more beautiful. City codes can create certainty and shape projects so they fit sensitively into neighborhood contexts. By establishing high sustainability standards—for locating projects, green building practices, site design and landscaping, and multi-modal transportation corridors—Austin can harness the positive, transformative power of redevelopment.

Partner up!

The City of Austin will work to advance the strategies in this plan, but it will need many partners to achieve its comprehensive vision. This is especially the case in its extraterritorial jurisdiction, where partnering with county governments is critical. Austin's strong private sector, institutions, and non-profit organizations share responsibility for shaping the future. These groups have significant resources and relationships and can do many things city government cannot. Where the right organization does not exist, a new one may need to be created. Implementing this plan will require strong partnerships among government, institutions, businesses, and community groups.

Measure progress and adapt**Be transparent**

As required by the City Charter, the City of Austin will review progress on the plan annually and assess the plan at least every five years. It will consider updates based on those reviews.

Austinites also need to engage in community-wide “how are we doing?” evaluations. It will be helpful to adopt a set of easily understood tools to measure and report on progress, and to assess the results of policies, programs, and projects. The measures and reporting should be highly visible to promote accountability. Ideally, we can all reference an ongoing community report card to see how we're doing with plan implementation.

Practice continuous learning

By implementing this comprehensive plan, Austin is embarking upon an exciting and visionary path. By definition, implementation will involve a learning curve. If our “report card” doesn't show the progress we had hoped for, we will need to make adjustments — perhaps to the actions or even to the goals themselves. As circumstances change, we'll need to update the plan accordingly.

A comprehensive plan is a living, evolving document. However, a long-range comprehensive plan typically must be followed for at least five years to see clear results. As adopted, the plan provides a strong framework to guide city actions at all levels. The vision and principles of the plan need to be respected. But over time, the community should expect to revisit and refine individual policies.

Be steadfast, but be flexible.



The Plan of the City of Austin, 1839 was created by Judge Edwin Waller. The plan consisted of a grid system where the north/south streets were named after the rivers of Texas while the east/west streets were named after native trees . The plan also identified a location for the Capitol for the Republic of Texas, parkland, and established Congress Avenue as the ceremonial main street for the new capital city. This pattern remains largely intact.

AUSTIN.

VII - All the alleys are Twenty ft. wide.

From Lexington to the Republic of France, No. 33, May 20th, West Hill, Mass.

EXPERIENCING AUSTIN: WHO ARE WE TODAY?

We Are a Unique Community

Population and Households

Housing and Neighborhoods

Land Use

Transportation

Economy

Environmental Resources

City Facilities and Services

Society And Health

Arts and Culture

Developing a Regional Perspective





CHAPTER 2

EXPERIENCING AUSTIN: WHO ARE WE TODAY?

Austin is an exemplary city. We are a state and national leader. A city filled with entrepreneurs and innovators. A funky, offbeat destination. A city of compassion and environmental responsibility. A beautiful, accepting community.

We also know that we face real challenges and we have to define and measure our current successes and deficiencies. What are we getting right? Where are we falling short? Through a detailed look at the city as it exists today, we can decide what works and what can be done better. This analysis will identify gaps and lead to questions resulting in new solutions. The Austin of 2012 will be the baseline against which our success in achieving the plan's vision will be measured.

WE ARE A UNIQUE COMMUNITY

Our progressive spirit, environmental ideals, and innovative character distinguish us from other metropolitan areas in Texas. Many of the City's past policy choices show an early understanding of growth and economic issues that many Texas cities only recently have begun to address. This contrast has enhanced Austin's community identity, creating a strong sense of our uniqueness in relation to the rest of the state and the nation.



THE AUSTIN SPIRIT

There's a spirit that animates Austin's people and special places. Something both laid back and passionate, built on unlikely pairings, like the State Capitol and the University of Texas, blocks away but worlds apart. Sometimes these happen in brief, beautiful moments, like the coming together of college students and cowboys at Threadgill's Tavern and later at the Armadillo World Headquarters. Sometimes it's a generations-long courtship, the way Austin's most substantial pro-development effort, rural electrification of the 1930s and 1940s, later led to the creation of one of Austin's defining and beloved environmental features, the Highland Lakes, and then to the country's premiere efforts in green energy and green building. Even the land brings together the Hill Country to the west and the Blackland Prairie to the east.

While no City program is ever going to be responsible for this spirit, nurturing it in whatever forms it takes in the future is as important to Austin's success as anything else in this plan.

One of the Austin Bike Zoo's pedal-powered puppets at Viva! Streets, an open streets festival held on Sixth Street to encourage walking, bicycling, and other active uses for city streets.

Austin's Historical Context

Before it was Austin, the future capital of the State of Texas was a small settlement named Waterloo, located on a bluff overlooking the Colorado River. In 1839, it became the capital of the Republic of Texas and was renamed in honor of the “Father of Texas,” Stephen F. Austin. Austin was selected as the capital city due to its steady water supply, hills, pleasant surroundings, and central location within the state. Already the seat of state government, Austin became an educational center in the 1880s with the establishment of the University of Texas. The government and educational sectors became mainstays of the local economy and began attracting people from across the state.

Unfortunately, our history also includes a story typical of many American cities: slavery followed by legally-enforced racial inequalities. Past land use planning contributed to the divide within Austin. The City of Austin’s 1928 “A City Plan for Austin Texas,” strongly reinforced racial segregation by designating an official “negro district.” This district was created to address the “race segregation problem” by calling for:

“All facilities and conveniences be provided the negroes in this district, as an incentive to draw the negro population to this area. This will eliminate the necessity of duplication of white and black schools, white and black parks, and other duplicate facilities for this area.”

Almost 50 years after the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964, we still have reminders of our segregated past in our residential patterns and economic landscape.

The city we know today had its beginnings in the last half of the 20th century. Confronted with serious economic and environmental problems, the choices made to address these difficult issues transformed Austin. In the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s, Austin experienced a population boom, growing more than 35 percent each decade. However, the city’s economy did not grow at the same pace. To address this disparity, Austin’s leaders strategized on how to expand the economy. This resulted in new directions that leveraged the city’s role as an educational center to attract high-tech employers such as IBM. Our new economic identity was a progressive one, dependent upon innovation and a highly-skilled and educated workforce.

During the early 1970s, an overtaxed electrical grid caused a series of major brownouts. These brownouts, coupled with the rising price of natural gas and the national energy crisis pointed to the need for new electricity sources. To supply the needed electricity, coal-fired energy plants were constructed as an alternative to natural gas. Following a close election in 1973, voters approved the City of Austin’s participation in a partnership to construct a new nuclear power plant, the South Texas Nuclear Project. Major cost overruns, project delays, and nuclear energy issues generally; and pollution caused by coal-fired power plants, proved highly divisive. In 1981, Austin voters authorized the sale of the City’s 16 percent share in the project, though no buyers could be found. The issues associated with nuclear energy and the concerns over the pollution and greenhouse gas emissions of coal-fired plants, colored by Austin’s “green” sensibility, led to the development of alternative energy sources and increased energy efficiency programs.

During the 1980s, elements of the city's character began to change further. Multi-family construction experienced a marked increase over previous decades, resulting in a number of sprawling "apartment cities" located throughout the city. Two major high tech research consortium companies, Microelectronics and Computer Technology Corporation and Sematech opened in Austin. By the early 1990s, the region had about 400 high-tech manufacturers. Throughout that decade, Austin's population grew at phenomenal rates, which led to concerted efforts to protect environmentally sensitive areas from development. These efforts are exemplified by the passage of the Save Our Springs ordinance and initiation of the Balcones Canyonlands Conservation Plan. The health of Austin's urban environment was also a concern and was reflected in the closing and relocation of the "Tank Farm" (a large gasoline storage facility) in 1993 and the decision to decommission the Holly Street Power Plant in 2007. Austin's pursuit of economic transformation and its reaction to the local and national energy crisis catalyzed a new civic consciousness. Rapid population growth during the 1970s also created new transportation and environmental pressures as Austin struggled with the stresses of a growing city. We emerged from the decade with a new environmental focus and economic direction that form the cornerstones of our current sustainability principles. Well before most Texas cities recognized connections between livability and sustainability, we were at the vanguard of the "green" movement.



The Holly Street Power Plant was decommissioned in 2007. Since then, the surrounding neighborhood has seen reinvestment.

Celebrating our creativity (by branding Austin as “The Live Music Capital of the World,” for example) has attracted talented, artistic, and entrepreneurial individuals, contributing to our eclectic small business community and the growth of the creative and technology sectors. We have confronted difficult issues and taken risks that have set us apart.

Austin is also a place where the funky and offbeat are accepted and celebrated. These qualities attract people from across the country who are looking for a place where they feel comfortable and one that provides opportunities not readily available in most other cities. The spirit of acceptance extends across the spectrum to include people of all faiths, ethnicities and races, sexual orientations, political leanings, and personal interests. The spirit of creativity and acceptance has created a place where people want to be and has set the stage for our current and future economic success.

POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS

We are a growing city, becoming more diverse, older, and urban.

Key Facts/Trends

Population

- Austin’s population grew by 20 percent between 2000 and 2010, making it the 14th most populous city in the U.S. About two-thirds of this growth is attributable to natural expansion (more births than deaths) and new residents moving into Austin, while about one-third of the new population was added through annexation.
- Austin added an estimated 30,221 people between April 1, 2010 and July 1, 2011 to reach a total population of 820,611, making it the 13th most populous city in the U.S.
- Austin’s share of the Austin-Round Rock region’s population has been declining. In 1960, 65 percent of the region’s population lived within the Austin city limits. By 2000, this had dropped to 52.5 percent, and by 2010 it dropped to 46 percent.
- Austin’s planning area (city limits and the extraterritorial jurisdiction; see Figure 2.1) is projected to add approximately 750,000 more people by 2039.

CHANGE IN POPULATION, 1960 - 2010		
Year	Population	Percent Change
1960	186,545	--
1970	253,539	35.9
1980	341,665	34.8
1990	465,622	36.3
2000	656,562	41
2010	790,390	20.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

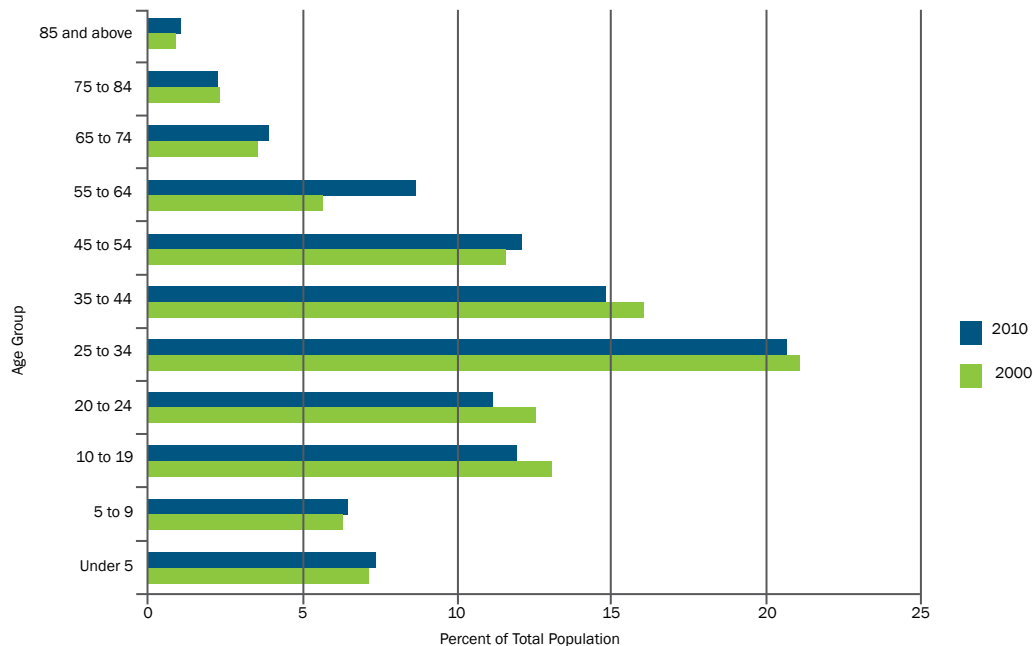
Households

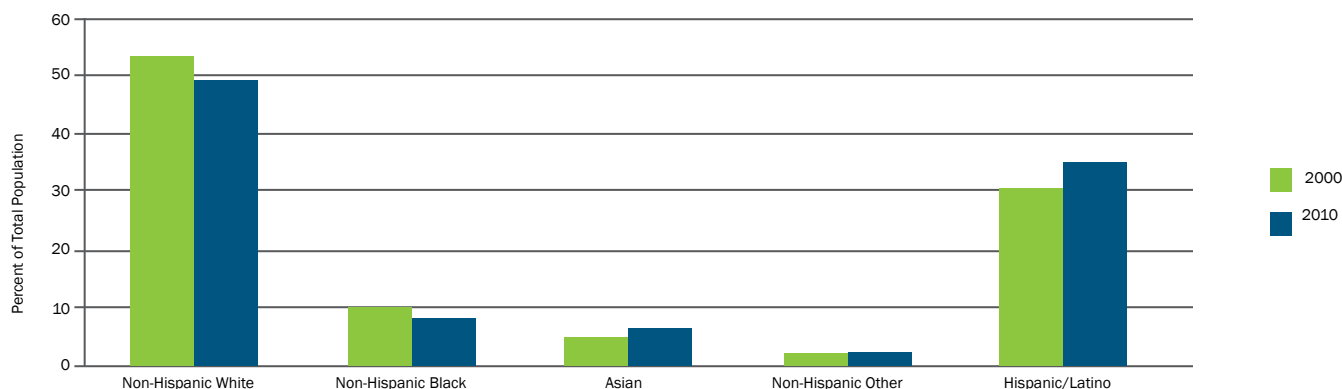
- Proportionally, Austin has far fewer family households (two or more people residing together who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption) than Texas as a whole, but a similar percentage of married-couples-with-children households. In 2010, only 52 percent of Austin households were family households, and of these, 34 percent were married with children. In comparison, in 2010, 70 percent of Texas households were family households; 34 percent were married with children.
- In 2010, more than 48 percent of Austin households were non-family households. Seventy-one percent of these were single-person households.

Age Distribution

- Austin is a young city. In 2010, more than 57 percent of the population was under 35 years old, and more than 72 percent was under age 45. The largest age group is 25-34 year olds, which is more than one-fifth of Austin's population.
- The Baby Boomer generation reaching retirement age is having an impact on Austin. The largest rate of growth since 2000 has been in those age groups of 55 and older. In the past decade, Austin saw an 84 percent increase in residents aged 55-59; a 97 percent increase in residents aged 60-64; and a 52 percent increase in residents aged 65-69.
- Other age groups have grown significantly as well. Austin's youth and senior populations have grown since 2000. In the past decade, Austin has experienced a 23 percent increase in children under age 10; a 26 percent increase in residents aged 80-84; and a 31 percent increase in residents aged 85 and above.

AGE DISTRIBUTION (2000-2010)



RACIAL/ETHNIC COMPOSITION (2000-2010)**MEDIAN FAMILY INCOME**

City	Median Family 2009 inflation- adjusted
Seattle, WA	\$85,432
San Diego, CA	\$75,492
Charlotte, NC	\$63,516
Austin	\$63,431
Portland, OR	\$62,189
Minneapolis, MN	\$61,510
Jacksonville, FL	\$58,497
Sacramento, CA	\$57,081
Denver, CO	\$56,909
Raleigh, NC	\$56,909
Nashville, TN	\$56,452
Fort Worth	\$55,405
Indianapolis, IN	\$53,491
Columbus, OH	\$52,917
San Antonio	\$51,540
Houston	\$47,278
Dallas	\$44,083

Racial/Ethnic Composition

- The racial and ethnic composition of the city has changed over the past decade. In 2010, non-Hispanic whites comprised a smaller proportion of the population than in 2000: 48.7 percent, compared with 52.9 percent in 2000.
- The Hispanic population increased, rising from 30.5 percent in 2002, to more than 35 percent in 2010. Eighty-three percent of these residents were of Mexican origin.
- Austin's Asian population also increased, with its share growing from 4.7 percent in 2000 to 6.3 percent in 2010.
- The proportion of African Americans in Austin decreased from 9.8 to 7.7 percent over the past 10 years. This reflects a decline in the total African American population in Austin. Despite this, the region's African American population grew over the same period.
- Almost 20 percent of Austin residents are foreign-born. More than half come from Mexico and about a quarter from Asia. Of those born in Asia, the majority are from India, followed by Vietnam, China, and Korea.

Median Incomes and Cost of Living

- Median incomes in Austin are higher than most other Texas cities. In 2009, Austin's median household income was \$50,132 and the median family income was \$63,431; while for the state, the median household income was \$48,259 and the median family income was \$56,650.
- The Austin-Round Rock metro's area cost of living is similar to other regions in Texas. For example in 2011, the Austin region had an estimated cost of living index of 93 (compared to a national average of 100, 96 in Dallas, and 91 in Houston). However when compared to peer metro areas across the country, the cost of living is even more affordable. Comparable regions such as Portland, Oregon (111), Seattle, Washington (120), and San Diego, California (131), had higher index scores indicating a higher cost of living.

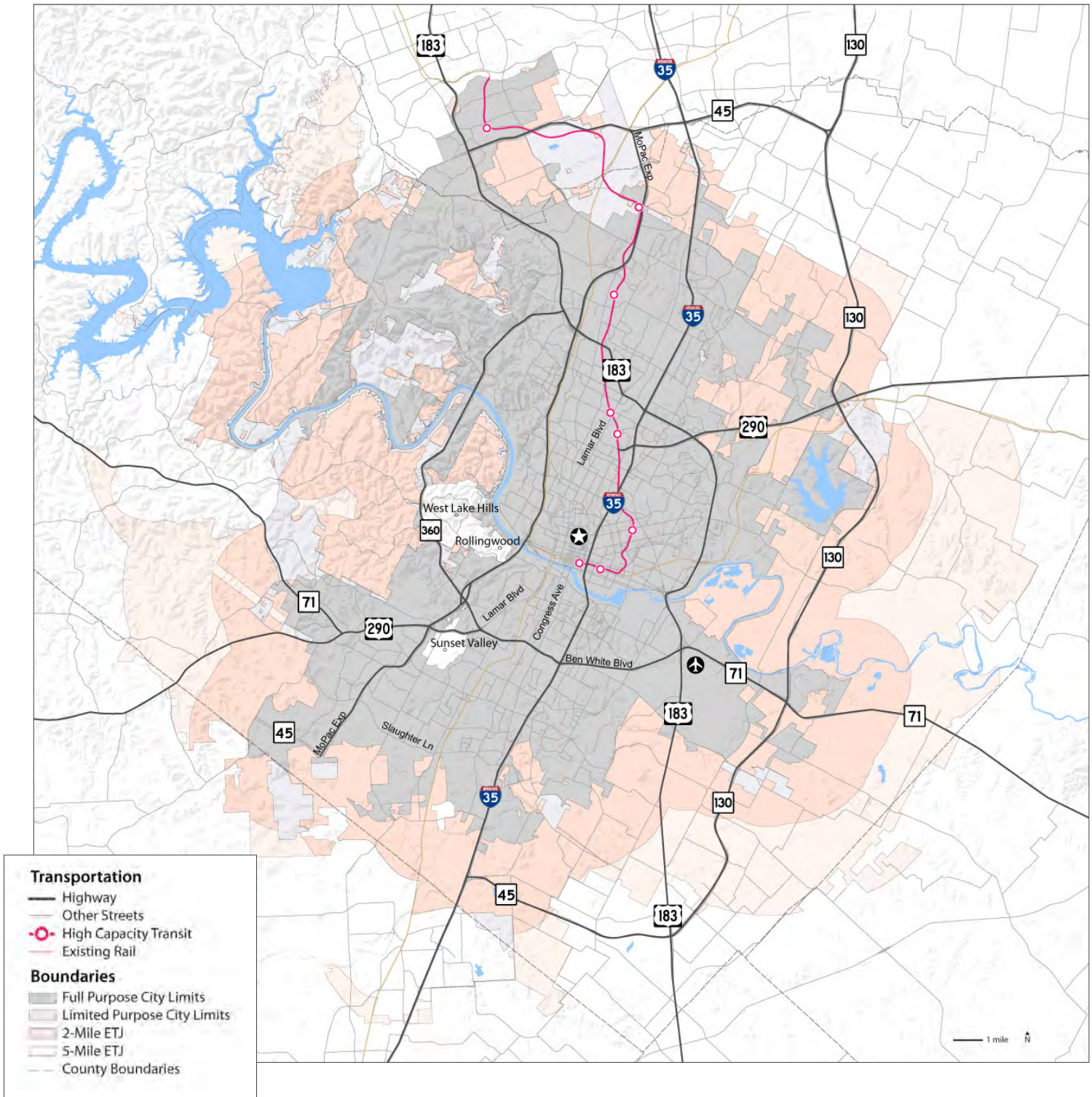
Poverty

- In 2011, 21 percent of Austin's residents lived below the poverty line. Almost one-third of all children under age five lived in poverty. Nearly 10 percent of the city's residents over the age of 65 lived in poverty. The 2011 Federal poverty level for a family of four is \$22,350.
- Nearly 83 percent of Austin children under age five living in poverty in 2010 were Hispanic. More than 45 percent of Hispanics under age five live in poverty.
- Twenty-seven percent of the individuals living in poverty in 2010 were foreign-born. Thirty-seven percent of individuals living in poverty resided in households where the head of household had not received a high school diploma.
- Additionally, 40 percent of Austin residents earned less than 200 percent of the federal poverty level in 2010.
- The 2011 Point In Time Count conducted by the Ending Community Homelessness Coalition identified 2,357 homeless individuals. Of these, 1,681 were single adults; the rest were families including at least one child.

Educational Attainment

- Austin's population is well-educated. In 2010, 44 percent of residents aged 25 and older had at least a bachelor's degree, and almost 16 percent had graduate or professional degrees. These rates are much higher than the state as a whole: in 2009, only 27 percent of all Texans aged 25 and over had at least a bachelor's degree, and nine percent had a graduate or professional degree.
- In 2010, 14 percent of Austin residents aged 25 and older did not have a high school diploma.
- If no intervening actions are taken, the percentage of Austinites with post-secondary education levels is expected to decline from 65 percent to 55 percent by 2040. The cost to Austin will be a loss of \$2.4 billion in annual income due to reduced career opportunities and earning capacities.

Figure 2.1 The Planning Area in 2011: City and its Extraterritorial Jurisdiction



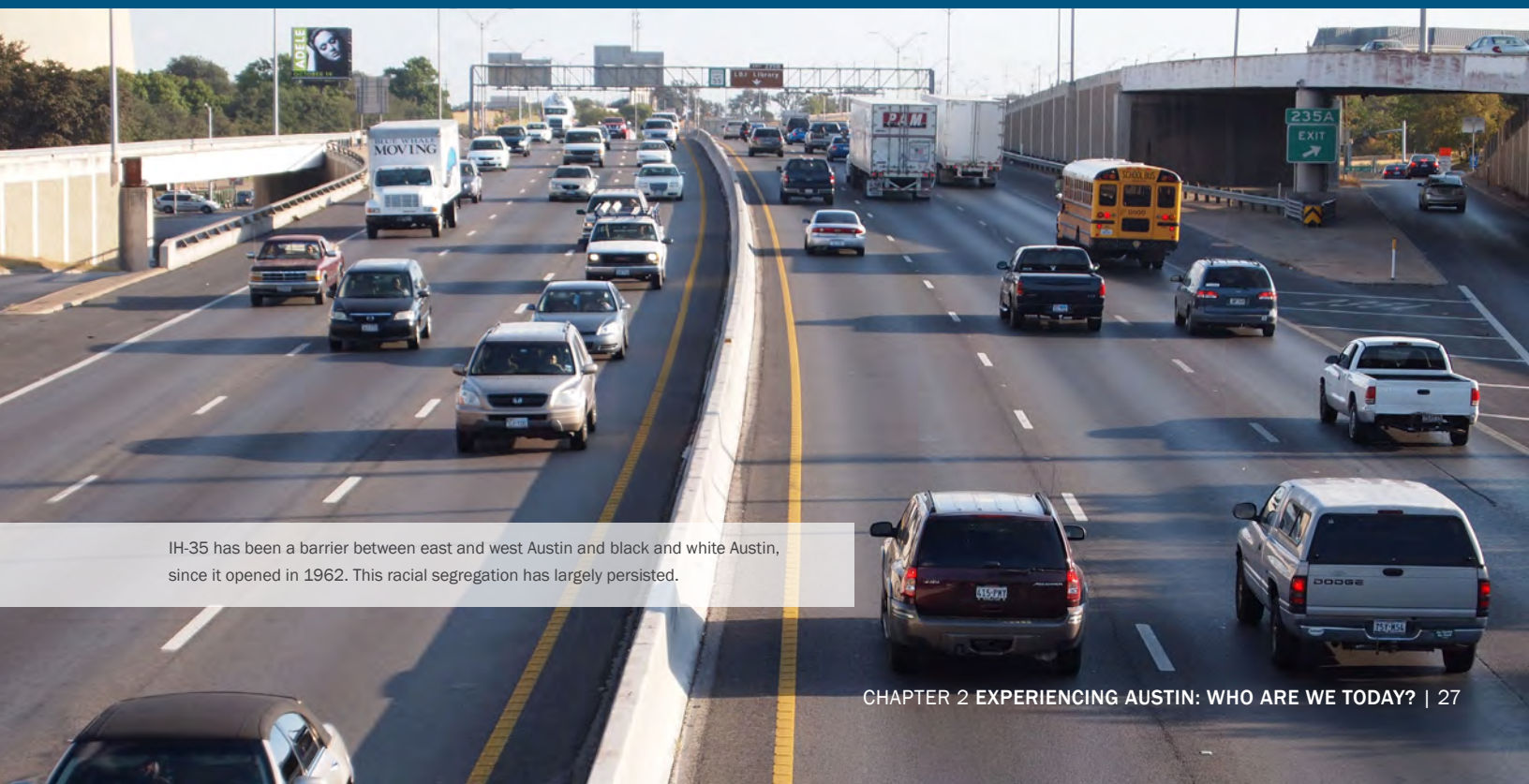
The geographic scope of the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* is Austin's current city limits and its extraterritorial jurisdiction, mostly located in Travis County but also encompassing parts of Bastrop, Hays, and Williamson Counties. The extraterritorial jurisdiction is the unincorporated land within five miles of Austin's boundary that is not within the city limits or extraterritorial jurisdiction of another city. It is the territory where Austin alone is authorized to annex land.

What Does It Mean?

Population and Growth

- Population projections show that Austin will almost double in population in 30 years. This will place heavy demands on infrastructure, resources, and services. Some of this growth will occur through annexation of unincorporated areas, but much of the growth will need to be accommodated through development within the city.
- Austin still has strong patterns of racial, ethnic, and income segregation.
- The growing number of older residents, aged 55 and above, has generated greater demand for services, different housing options, and amenities.
- The increase in the number of young children will affect Austin's school districts over the next decade.
- The large number of younger, educated residents, such as married couples without children and single-person households, may signal increasing demand for housing other than single-family detached units. Many of these people already live in the urban core, and an increased demand for urban living may be met with redevelopment that includes townhouses, condominiums, and apartments.
- Services to address poverty and limited job skills are needed in Austin.
- Median household and family incomes may be higher than those of the rest of the state, but Austin's high housing and transportation costs may consume greater proportions of household budgets, relative to other Texas cities.

Data sources: 2009 American Community Survey, 2010 Census; City of Austin Community Inventory; Kiplinger Cost of Living Index (from Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census, Martin Prosperity Institute); "An Investment in the Future of Central Texas, AARO."



IH-35 has been a barrier between east and west Austin and black and white Austin, since it opened in 1962. This racial segregation has largely persisted.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

We have a variety of neighborhoods but limited housing choices. Our housing costs are rising.

Key Facts/Trends

Housing Units

- In 2010, Austin had an estimated 354,241 housing units. Total housing units increased by 28 percent from 2000 to 2010.
- Single-family detached housing made up about 46 percent of total housing stock in 2010. Between 2000 and 2010, the proportion of single-family detached remained about the same, while the percentage of multi-family housing in 10-19 unit buildings increased and the percentage in 20 or more unit buildings decreased.

Home Ownership

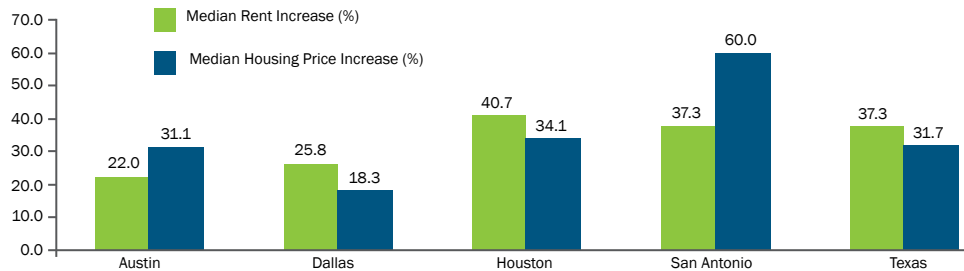
- Austin has lower rates of homeownership than Texas: in 2010, 67 percent of Texans owned their own homes, while 50 percent of Austinites were homeowners. However, Austin had higher rates of homeownership than Dallas (46 percent) and Houston (49 percent).
- Hispanic and African American households have lower homeownership rates than White and Asian households. In 2010, 53 percent of White households and 41 percent of Asian households were homeowners, but only 34 percent of Hispanic households and 32 percent of African American households owned their homes.
- Seventy percent of Austin's married households own their home, compared with 42 percent of single-person households in 2010. Younger singles under age 35 were much more likely to rent.

Housing Values/Affordability

- Over the last 10 years, median housing costs have risen by 85 percent, while household incomes have grown at a much lower rate. Between 1998 and 2008, the median single-family house price increased by almost 90 percent (\$129,900 to \$240,000) while the percentage of all single-family houses considered affordable declined from 42 to 28 percent. During the same period, Austin's median family income increased by only 36 percent.
- Assessed property values have generally increased in Austin between 1995 and 2010, with declines in 2004 and 2011. Despite a generally declining property tax rate over that period, total taxes paid have risen, substantially in some parts of Austin.

Rents

- In 2010, Austin's median rent was \$901. This is higher than the 2010 Texas median of \$801 and a 24 percent increase since 2000. Due to tighter capital markets caused by the recent recession, the current supply of apartments has not kept up with demand, causing a marked increase in rents that is expected to continue into the middle of this decade.

INCREASE IN MEDIAN RENT AND MEDIAN HOUSING PRICES, 2000-2009

- Some affordable apartment rental units have been converted to condominium use, contributing to a shortage of units in the rental housing market, especially for households with incomes less than \$20,000.

Housing Cost Burden

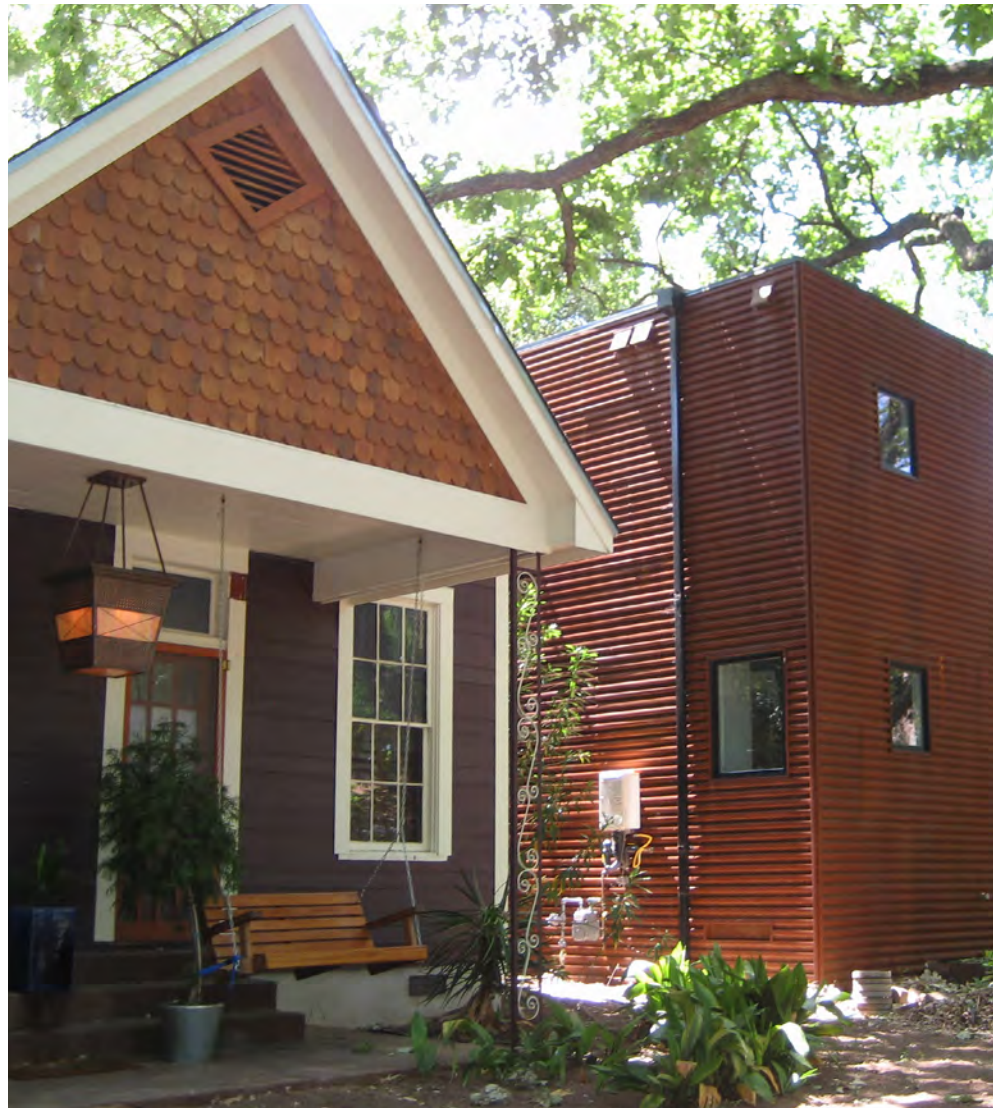
- Rising housing prices impose higher monthly costs on Austin's households. In 2010, 30 percent of homeowners paid more than 30 percent of their incomes in housing costs and 12 percent paid more than 50 percent.
- Austin's renter population is particularly affected by rising housing costs. In 2010, 53 percent of renter households were paying 30 percent or more of their incomes in rent. Twenty-nine percent were paying 50 percent or more for rent. This is an increase from 2000, when 42 percent of renter households paid more than 30 percent of income in rent and 20 percent paid 50 percent or more for rent.

Neighborhoods

- Austin's neighborhoods built prior to World War II are characterized by mixed housing and lot sizes, interconnected streets, diverse architectural styles, and compact character. These neighborhoods typically have a school and park within their boundaries.
- Neighborhoods built since the late 1950s are more uniform in size and character and are designed in a fashion that increasingly requires an automobile in order to travel between home, work, shopping, and services.
- There are a growing number of neighborhoods throughout Austin where immigrants, largely from Latin America, are increasingly settling. Language and cultural differences between this growing community and the rest of Austin have led to isolation, which makes it difficult for the City to provide these residents with critical services such as basic infrastructure maintenance, building code enforcement, emergency response, public safety, and health services.

- In the last ten years, neighborhoods in east and south Austin—where market values have been historically lower than other Austin neighborhoods—have seen new development, reinvestment, and revitalization. This trend has raised the issue of long-time, often less affluent residents being displaced by more affluent residents.
- Some residents are concerned about the real and perceived effects of new development on the character of older, inner-city Austin neighborhoods.
- In 1997, the City of Austin initiated a neighborhood planning program; to date, 48 neighborhood planning areas have completed the process and adopted neighborhood plans (see Appendix G). These plans cover about 16 percent of land area in the planning area and 52 percent of the population in the planning area.

The Bouldin neighborhood integrates new housing with traditional houses.



What Does It Mean?

Housing and Neighborhoods

- Housing costs are rising in many close-in neighborhoods. As a result, many long-time residents of Austin, particularly low-income renters, are finding that they no longer can afford to stay.
- As the Austin housing market has become more expensive, the geographic distribution of units affordable to households earning 80 percent or less of the local median family income has changed. Housing options for moderate and low-income households have moved to increasingly distant suburban areas of Austin, which in turn increase transportation expenditures.
- Austin is a majority renter city due, in large part, to the significant numbers of college and university students, recent graduates, and other young people who live here. This demographic bulge, as well as the needs of other Austinites of more modest means, highlights the need for more affordable rental housing. This demographic group has also demonstrated a market preference for more urban amenities and lifestyles.
- Higher housing costs and slower-growing household incomes may prompt many families to rent rather than purchase a home.
- High demand for rental units translates into demand for housing products other than single-family detached homes.
- To accommodate the increasing diversity of Austin area households, more housing options will be needed to address our demographic changes.
- Infill development and redevelopment in centers and along major roadways will be needed to meet the growing demand for higher-density, closer-in affordable housing. Creating harmonious transitions between adjacent neighborhoods is an important component of the development process.
- As the city's housing stock ages, home repair costs will create additional burdens on low-to moderate-income residents. Home repair services can help low-income households stay in their homes, mitigating gentrification pressures in historically low-income neighborhoods near the urban core.
- Though the numbers are declining, many people in Austin continue to be homeless. Both housing and services are necessary to help these very-low income residents transition to stability.

Data sources: 2009 American Community Survey, Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University, City of Austin Community Inventory.

LAND USE

We continue to rapidly urbanize, largely developing outward on lower-cost land in lower-density suburban patterns.

Key Facts/Trends

- Over the last sixty years, the growth dynamic in Austin and the surrounding region has been characterized by increasing population, rapid urbanization of land, and outward expansion. Between 2000 and 2010, Austin's land area grew by more than 19 percent.

CHANGE IN LAND AREA, 1950 - 2011		
Year	Land Area (in sq miles)	Percent Change
1950	37.5	--
1960	55.1	45
1970	80.1	45
1980	123.9	55
1990	225.6	82
2000	257.9	14
2010	307.8	19
Source: City of Austin		

- During the past decade there has been a modest trend of infill development and redevelopment in established areas of Austin; however, the pace of urban core development lags far behind new development in suburban areas and beyond.
- In 2010, Austin was more dense (2,653 persons per square mile) than in 2000 (2,477 persons per square mile) but it remains less dense than most major cities in Texas, as well as our peer cities across the country.

AVERAGE DENSITY IN AUSTIN AND COMPARABLE CITIES (2010)	
National	Density (people per square mile) in 2010
Seattle, WA	7,254
Minneapolis, MN	7,084
Portland, OR	4,376
San Diego, CA	4,020
Dallas, TX	3,517
Houston	3,501
San Antonio, TX	2,880
Raleigh, NC	2,826
Austin, TX	2,653
Charlotte, NC	2,457
Fort Worth	2,181
Jacksonville, FL	1,100
Source: Census Data, 2010	

Figure 2.2 Annexation by Decade

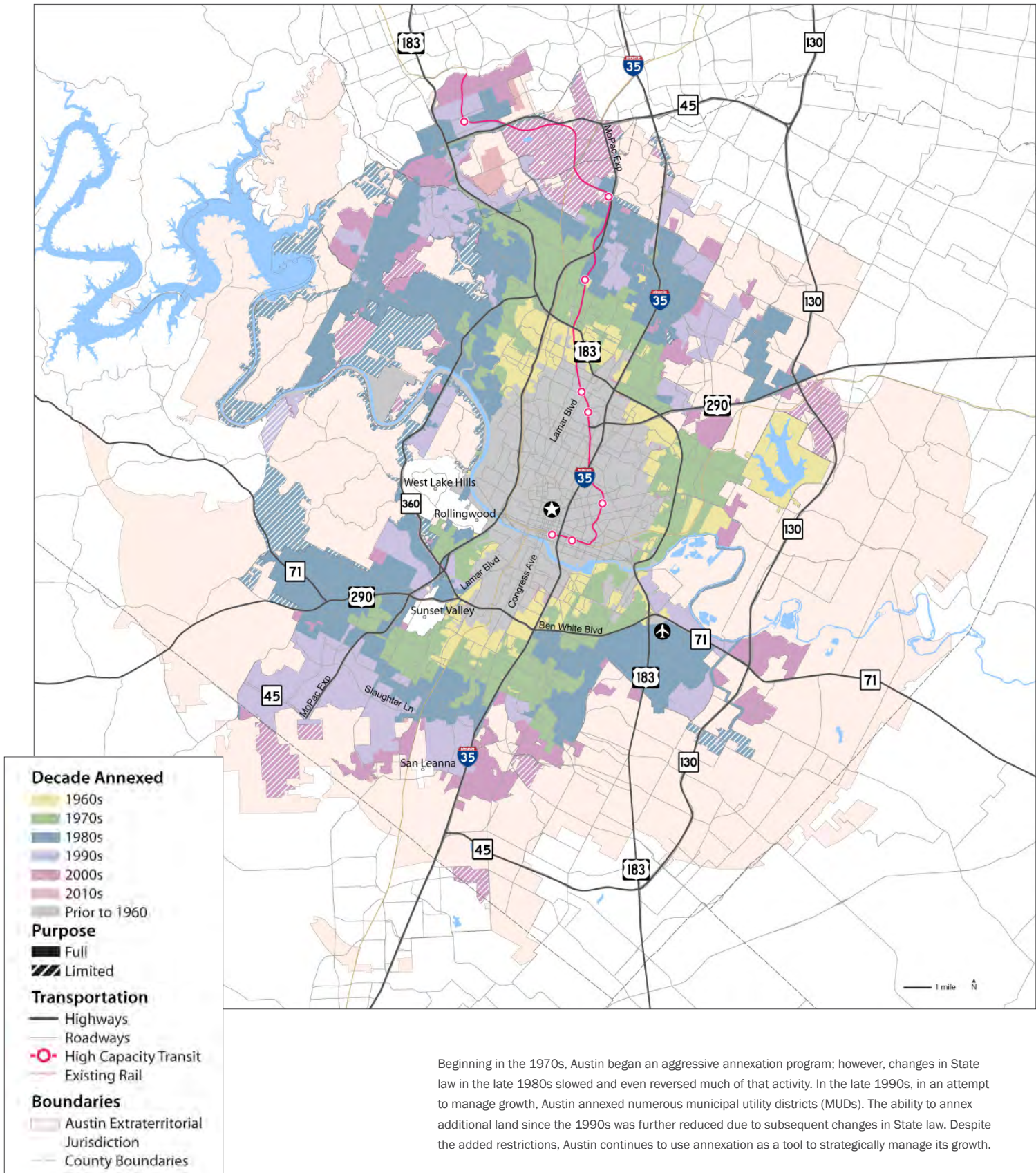
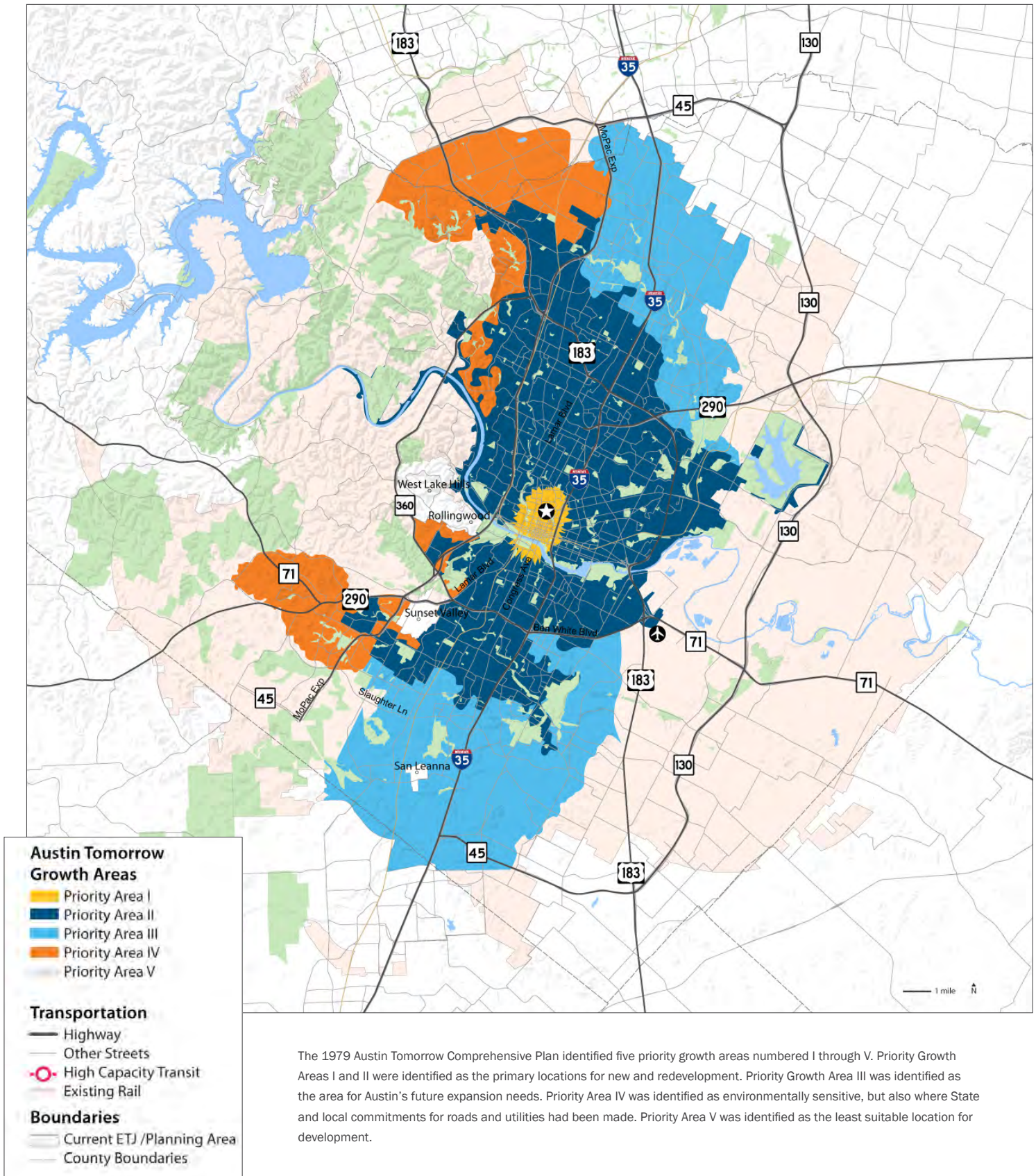


Figure 2.3 1979 Austin Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan Map

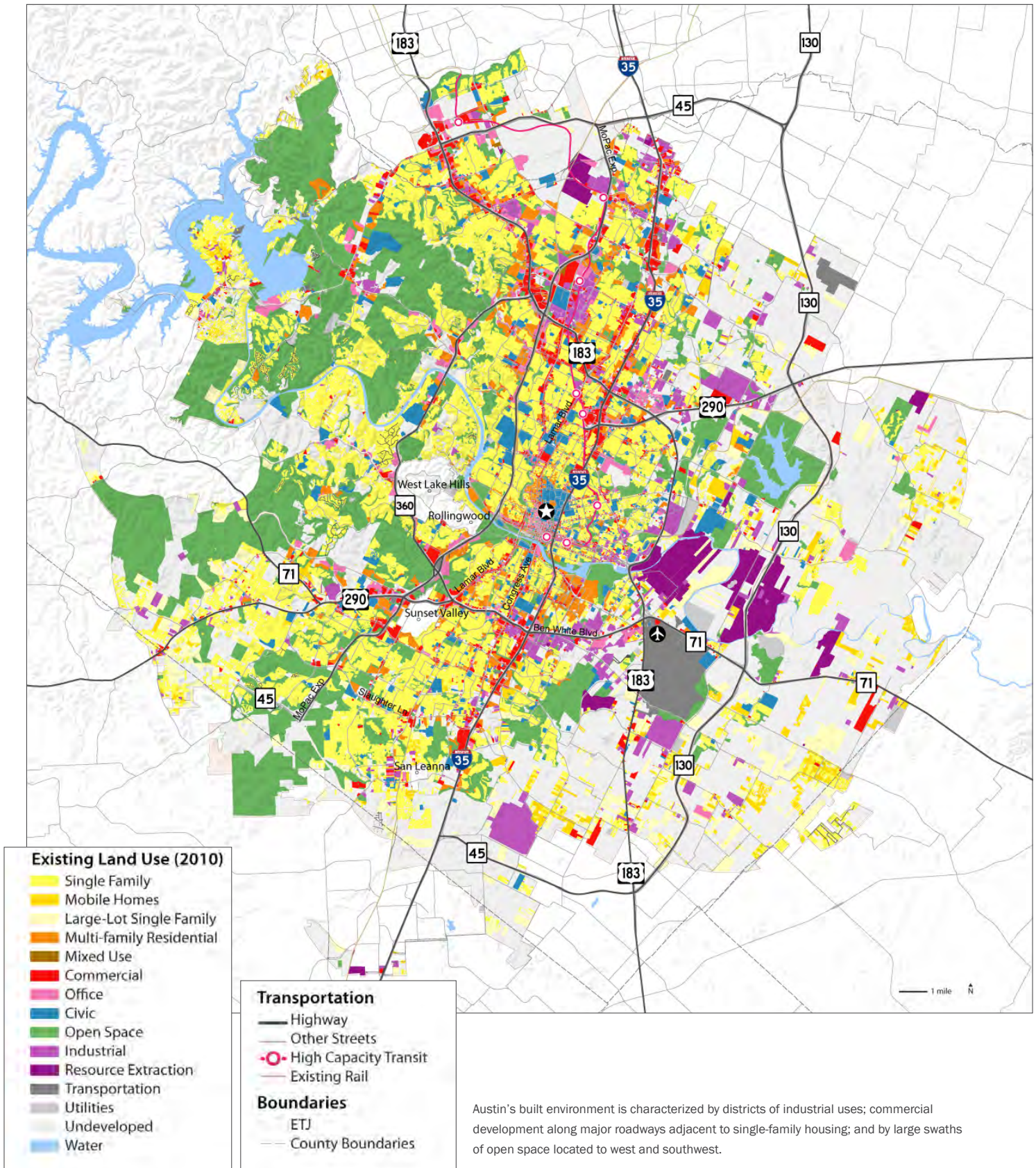


- Single-family residential and open space makes up the largest percentage of “developed area” in the city and extraterritorial jurisdiction. Not surprisingly, the percentage of acreage classified as undeveloped and large-lot single-family decreased from 2003 to 2010.
- The percentage of total developed area increased from 53 percent in 2003 to 64 percent in 2010, while the total percentage of undeveloped and large-lot single-family land decreased. Total land area increased as a result of annexation during this period (see Figure 2.2).
- Although 34 percent of Austin’s land area is classified as “undeveloped,” much of it has environmental constraints, such as floodplains or steep slopes, or is in large-lot single-family use. In 2009, approximately 73,000 acres were undeveloped and had no environmental constraints. However, of this undeveloped acreage, only 1,581 acres were located in urban watersheds. More than 50,000 acres of undeveloped land with no environmental constraints are located in suburban watersheds in the eastern part of the city.

LAND USE IN AUSTIN AND THE ETJ (2003 - 2010) - SEE FIGURE 2.4					
Use	Acres in 2003	Acres in 2010	Percent Change	Percentage of Total Land Area in 2003	Percentage of Total Land Area in 2010
Single-Family	61,703	69,011	12 %	15 %	17 %
Multi-Family	9,013	10,777	20 %	2 %	3 %
Mobile Homes	6,478	7,000	8 %	2 %	2 %
Residential Subtotal	77,194	86,788	12 %	19 %	22 %
Commercial	8,031	10,317	28 %	2 %	3 %
Office	6,174	6,618	7 %	2 %	2 %
Industrial	9,662	13,624	41 %	2 %	3 %
Mixed use	n/a	102	n/a	n/a	n/a
Commercial Subtotal	23,868	30,660	28 %	6 %	8 %
Civic	9,496	10,994	16 %	2 %	3 %
Utilities	6,117	2,766	-55 %	2 %	1 %
Open Space	55,104	69,292	26 %	14 %	17 %
Resource Extraction	5,419	6,687	23 %	1 %	2 %
Institutional/Utility Subtotal	76,136	89,739	18 %	19 %	22 %
Transportation	4,770	5,533	16 %	1 %	1 %
Streets and Roads	32,224	44,254	37 %	8 %	11 %
Transportation Subtotal	36,994	49,788	35 %	9 %	12 %
TOTAL DEVELOPED AREA	214,192	256,975	20 %	53 %	64 %
Undeveloped	145,437	118,679	-18 %	36 %	29 %
Large-Lot Single-Family	31,836	17,782	-44 %	8 %	4 %
TOTAL UNDEVELOPED AREA	177,273	136,462	-23 %	44 %	34 %
Water	10,521	10,137	-4 %	3 %	3 %
TOTAL AREA	401,985	403,574	0.4 %	100 %	100 %

Source: City of Austin, Note that the mixed use category was added after 2003.

Figure 2.4 Existing Land Use (2010)



Historic Preservation

- Austin has designated more than 550 local Historic Landmarks. These are properties which have architectural, historical, archaeological, or cultural significance. This designation rewards property owners with a tax exemption in exchange for regulation of the property. Owners must maintain the property's architectural integrity and are required to apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior changes.
- In 2007, Austin amended the Land Development Code to allow Local Historic Districts. These districts include groups of related architecturally and historically significant properties. Property owners within a district must apply for a Certificate of Appropriateness to make exterior changes to these properties. To establish a district, more than 50 percent of the affected property owners must agree. Austin has designated three Local Historic Districts: the Harthan Street Historic District, the Castle Hill Historic District, and the Hyde Park Historic District.
- Austin has 190 properties designated as Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks. This is a state-level designation awarded by the Texas Historical Commission to properties of local, regional, and/or state significance. The designation carries legal protection for the exterior of the historic property, with required review for any proposed exterior alterations. Recorded landmarks are eligible for state preservation grant funds and also qualify owners for technical assistance.
- Austin contains 164 historic properties and 15 historic districts listed on the National Register of Historic Places. This is an honorary designation recognizing properties of greater-than-local significance. The City, however, adopted regulations preventing National Register properties from being demolished without an approved permit.
- Austin is home to a number of history-related museums that include the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum, the Republic of Texas Museum, the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum, the French Legation Museum, and the Austin History Center. Two University of Texas facilities operate as historic research centers: the Harry Ransom Center and the Center for American History.



The historic Goodall Wooten house is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, operating today as a boutique hotel and restaurant.

Susceptibility to Change Analysis

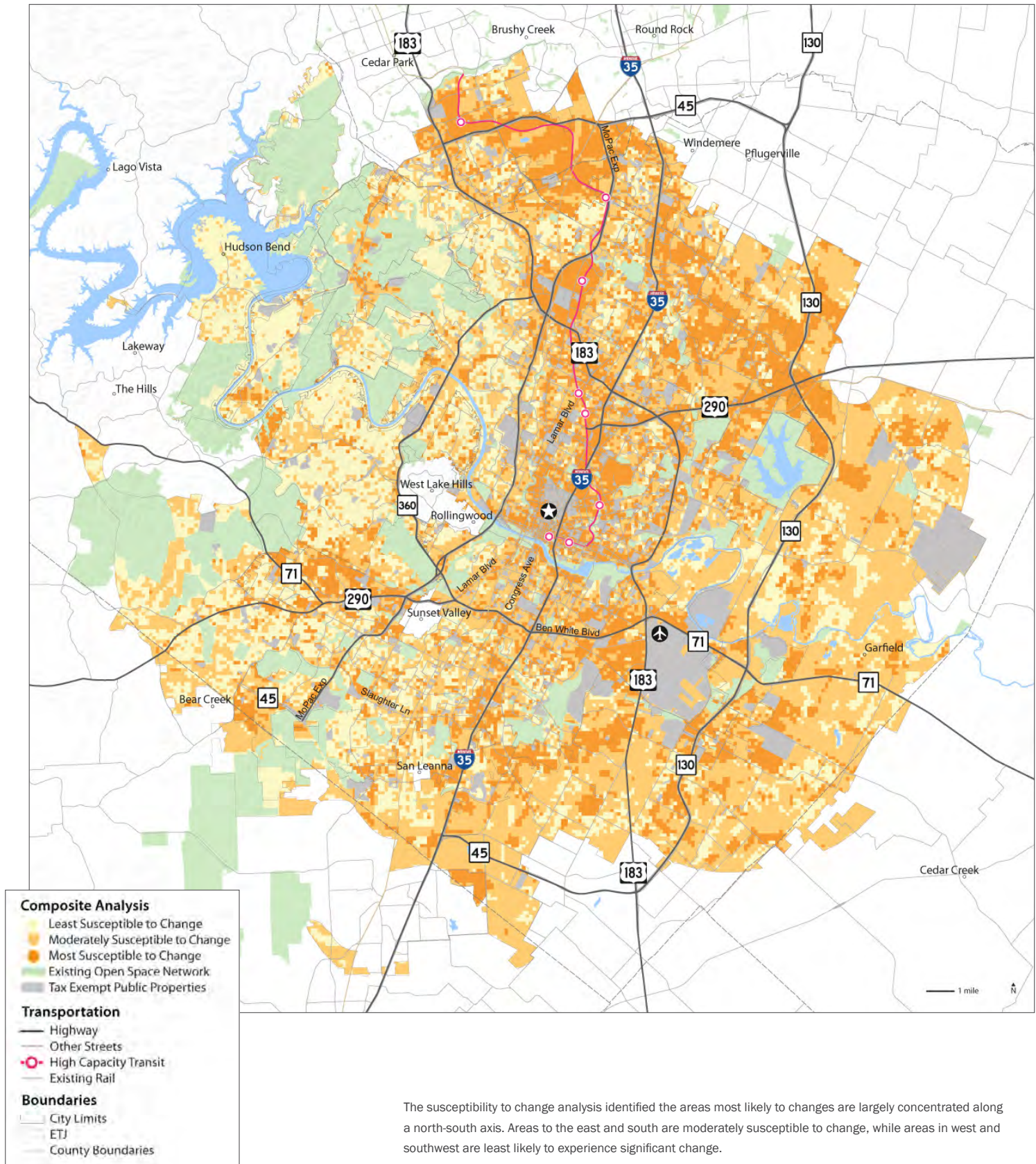
Given the city's population and employment projections for the next three decades, it is clear that Austin's existing land use pattern must change to accommodate this growth in a more sustainable manner. To inform the comprehensive planning process, an analysis was conducted to determine which areas of the city have the greatest likelihood of developing or redeveloping (Figure 2.5). The analysis considered more than ten factors and combined them to determine areas more or less likely to change. The analysis factors included owner occupancy, land status, land value, zoning, pending development cases, projected employment growth, road access, availability of other infrastructure, and other indicators of redevelopment potential. In general, the analysis found that:

- Areas most likely to change are concentrated in a north-south axis, particularly from downtown Austin north to Williamson County, between Loop 1 and State Highway 130.
- Areas in the eastern and southern portions of the city and its extraterritorial jurisdiction are moderately susceptible to change.
- Areas in the western portion of the city and its extraterritorial jurisdiction are least susceptible to change.

The Susceptibility to Change Analysis map illustrates North Lamar Boulevard is an area highly susceptible to change.



Figure 2.5 Susceptibility to Change Analysis



What Does It Mean?

Land Use

- Very little undeveloped land is available within the city's urban core. In the absence of policy or regulatory changes, new growth will likely occur in outlying areas where land values are lower.
- Total developed land is increasing. As land values in suburban areas rise, owners are selling undeveloped or agricultural land as a result of higher property taxes or returns.
- Growth within the city's urban core will involve redevelopment and increases in density.
- As a governmental and educational center, Austin has a large percentage of institutional uses. These uses are not likely to change.
- Austin has an active historic preservation program.
- The city has a substantial amount of agricultural land that may be converted to other uses as land values rise.
- Generally, less intensive land use changes will occur in the western part of the city due to environmental constraints.

Data sources: 2009 American Community Survey, City of Austin Community Inventory, City of Austin GIS.



Over the past decade, Downtown has seen significant reinvestment and redevelopment.

TRANSPORTATION

We are experiencing increasing traffic congestion and transportation costs. There is a renewed interest in creating a system incorporating all transportation choices.

Key Facts/Trends

Transportation Costs

- The average household in the Austin-Round Rock region spends 23.3 percent of income on transportation costs. Austin's transportation expenditure falls within the range of comparable cities such as Dallas (22.6), San Diego (22.9), Portland (23.7), Nashville (25.4), and Seattle (25).

Transportation Modes and Travel Time

- In 2009, 73 percent of Austin's working population drove alone to work and 10 percent carpoolled. This rate of car usage, however, was less than Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, and the state of Texas as a whole. Motorists in Austin who drove alone to work earned approximately 1.2 times Austin's median household income.
- During the same year, five percent of Austin's working population rode a bus to work, one percent bicycled, and 2.3 percent walked. Workers choosing these modes of transportation earned approximately 60 percent of Austin's median household income.
- In 2009, the majority of Austin's workers had commutes of 30 minutes or less, generally shorter than those in Houston, Dallas, or peer cities such as Seattle or San Diego.
- A 2008 Brookings Institution study found that between 2002 and 2006 Austin led the nation's largest metropolitan areas in reducing the number of vehicle miles traveled. During this period, Austin's vehicle miles traveled per capita decreased more than 12 percent. In 2006 the city's vehicle miles traveled per capita (4,974 miles) ranked 77th out of 100, which was much less than that of Raleigh (17th) Minneapolis (58th), and Seattle (64th).

TRAVEL TIME TO WORK, 2009									
Commute Time	Percentage of Workers								
	Austin	Dallas	Houston	San Antonio	Raleigh, NC	San Diego, CA	Portland, OR	Seattle, WA	Minneapolis, MN
Less than 30 minutes	71.8	63.9	61.1	68.9	74.8	74.0	70.3	63.8	73.2
30-59 minutes	23.8	30.1	31.8	26.8	21.6	22.5	25.4	30.7	23.1
60 minutes or more	4.4	6.1	7.0	4.3	3.6	3.5	4.3	5.5	3.7
Source: U.S. Census Bureau									

Roads/Highways

- Austin's major highways have shaped growth patterns in the city and the its extraterritorial jurisdiction. Interstate 35 facilitated Austin's north-south development orientation, but also created a physical barrier between east and west Austin. Other freeways and arterials that are part of the highway pattern, such as the Loop 1 (Mopac Expressway), Loop 360, U.S. 290, U.S. 183, and State Highway 71, led to lower density development spreading away from Austin's urban core.
- Older freeways, including Interstate 35 and Loop 1, have reached their capacity.

Transit

- Capital Metro operated 83 bus routes in Fall 2011, including regular, commuter/express, university, and late night buses. System-wide weekday ridership averaged 131,440 boardings.
- Opened in 2010, Capital Metro's MetroRail line (the Red Line) has nine stations and extends from downtown Austin to the City of Leander. Weekday ridership in Fall 2011 was approximately 1,800 boardings.

Bicycle/Pedestrian

- The Bicycle Master Plan recommends 900 miles of bicycle lanes (130 miles currently exist) and 350 miles of multi-use trails (50 miles currently exist). When the plan is fully realized, there will be bicycle lanes on 21.3 percent of Austin's roadways.
- Since adopting the Bicycle Master Plan in 2009, the Bicycle Program has installed or improved 15 bicycle lane-miles per year.
- The Sidewalk Master Plan indicated that there were approximately 3,500 linear miles of roads without sidewalks. About 10 percent of these gaps in the sidewalk network are along arterials with the remaining 90 percent along collectors or residential streets.

Recommended Improvements in Existing Plans

- The Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2035 Regional Transportation Plan recommends \$3.6 billion in regionally funded roadway projects, \$2.9 billion in public transportation projects, and \$444 million in bicycle and pedestrian projects. Projects are prioritized based on funding availability.

- Prompted by the inability of the gas tax to provide sufficient revenue to support expansion of the freeway system, recommended highway improvements in Texas center on toll roads. In the Austin area, these include the northern Loop 1 extension, State Highway 45, State Highway 130, and the U.S. 183A Expressway.
- The Lone Star Rail District proposes a regional commuter rail line paralleling Interstate 35 between San Antonio and Georgetown. An additional commuter rail line (the Green Line) is planned to provide service between downtown Austin and Elgin. In addition, the City of Austin is exploring the possibility of a rail line serving Central Austin and connecting to other transit systems.
- The Austin-Bergstrom International Airport Master Plan projects passenger activity to double from 2007-2026 (8.7 million-17.5 million annually). There are also future plans for a third runway as traffic increases.



Austin's first cycle track on Rio Grande Street is one example of how Austin is committed to becoming a world-class bicycling city.

What Does It Mean?

Transportation

- Transportation infrastructure responds to and shapes growth. Austin's sprawling development away from the urban core is partially the result of transportation decisions that prioritized highway construction. As a result, the city and region have been slow to develop a comprehensive transit system. Limited commuter rail and bus service to suburban areas has stressed the area's highway system, due to few transportation options beyond the car.
- The absence of a strong transit system makes it more difficult for Austin to encourage efficient land use patterns.
- Despite Austinites' limited transportation options, residents and workers are less automobile dependent than those in other major Texas cities.
- In 2005, about 7 percent of households did not have access to a motor vehicle and 43 percent had one vehicle available. Transportation choices other than an automobile can provide lower-cost options; however, transit route and service limitations and gaps in sidewalk and bicycle networks can increase travel times and reduce access to jobs and services throughout the greater Austin area. In addition, limited transit, pedestrian, and bicycle networks reduce the attractiveness of other modes and pose safety risks.
- In the past decade, Austin has worked to change the focus of its transportation policies toward its growing transit, bicycle, and sidewalk network.
- The average household in the Austin region spends one-quarter of its income on transportation, contributing to unaffordability in Austin and the region.

Data sources: 2009 American Community Survey; City of Austin Community Inventory; Capital Area Metropolitan Transportation Organization; Capital Metropolitan Transit Authority; Bureau of Labor Statistics; Brookings Institution, "The Road . . . Less Traveled: An Analysis of Vehicle Miles Traveled Trends in the U.S." (2008); CNT Housing and Transportation Affordability Index (2010).



ECONOMY

We have a thriving economy, resilient due to its diversity and entrepreneurial spirit; however, we need to prepare our workforce to adapt to emerging employment sectors and technological changes.

Key Facts/Trends

Labor Force

- Between 1990 and 2010, Austin's labor force grew by more than 50 percent—or more than double the national rate.
- Austin's unemployment rate was 7.4 percent in September 2011, the highest in twenty years. However, this was lower than the Texas rate of 8.5 percent or the U.S. rate of 9.1 percent.
- In 2010, more than 72 percent of Austin's population aged 16 and over was in the workforce.
- Among the working adult population, African Americans had the highest unemployment rate at 13.4 percent.
- Unemployment was also related to levels of educational attainment, with those with less than a high school degree or G.E.D. experiencing greater unemployment (13.9 percent) than those completing college (4.6 percent).
- The percentage of Austin's workers with college degrees continues to rise and is far above the rest of the state.
- Almost 20 percent of adults older than 25 have begun but not completed a college education.
- Young professionals aged 25-44 comprises 34 percent of Austin's population. This group is recognized as a vital part of the city's creative sector, which includes art, film and visual media, gaming and digital media, and music, and serves as a strong driver of innovation and a significant consumer of urban amenities.
- The Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) projects that Travis County will have over one million jobs by 2035, most of which will be located in Austin. Austin's downtown will still be a regional employment center, but many employers will locate in outlying areas along major highways.

Employers/Business Sectors

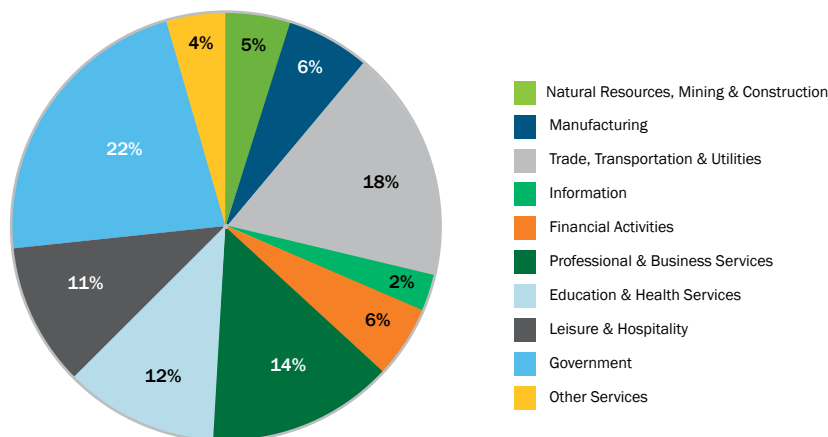
- Gross domestic product in the Austin-Round Rock region grew by 65 percent between 2001 and 2010 (from about \$52 to \$86 billion). Even after adjusting for inflation, the Austin region's gross domestic product rose by 34 percent during this period.
- Business formation growth was strong between 2001 and 2010. The total number of establishments in the Austin region grew by 34 percent.



Team members of The Butler Bros, Coloring Book Studio, Bret Stiles Design, Shiny Object, Bold Muse, and do512 holding a creative lab at The Butler Bros office. Creative businesses, such as graphic design, digital media, film, and gaming are important contributors to Austin's economy. Photograph courtesy of Travis Wurgles.

- The largest employers in the greater Austin area in 2009 included government, universities, technology, warehouse and distribution, and health care.
- Since 2000, Austin has experienced significant increases in multiple job sectors: health care; professional and management; and arts, entertainment, and food. During the same period, the number of manufacturing jobs decreased by over five percent.
- The State of Texas faces a critical shortage of health care professionals.
- The Austin region is consistently regarded as one of the top regions in the nation for small business. Small businesses grew by 1.5 percent between 2007 and 2008 (the most recent period for which statistics are available), at a much higher rate than any other region (no other region had a growth rate higher than 0.6 percent). Firms with fewer than 20 employees accounted for 81% of total growth in businesses in 2007.
- Local businesses contribute three times the economic impact to Austin's economy as national merchants, according to a 2002 study for the Austin Independent Business Alliance.
- Austin's traditional high-tech base is being forced to move into other sectors. As "offshoring" continues to affect the manufacturing and electronics base, the city is refocusing on other high-tech industries such as medical and life sciences; clean energy, which includes sustainable design and building, smart grid technologies, and solar energy; creative industries such as gaming, digital media, film, post-production; data centers; and professional services and corporate headquarters.
- The clean energy sector presents a key growth and job creation opportunity. The city has emerged as a center for clean energy technologies, with a supportive local utility and forward-thinking public policies focused on sustainability.
- The majority of employment growth within Austin over the next 20 years is projected to occur in the eastern part of the city (extending out to State Highway 130).

SELECTED MAJOR EMPLOYERS		
Employing 6,000 or more	Employing 2,000-5,999	Employing 1,000-1,999
Austin School District	Advanced Micro Devices (AMD)	3M
City of Austin	Texas State University-San Marcos	ACS State Healthcare
Federal Government	National Instruments	Lower Colorado River Authority
IBM	Austin Community College	Austin American-Statesman
Dell	Travis County	Capital Metro Transportation Authority
State of Texas	AT&T	Emerson Process Management
University of Texas at Austin	Applied Materials	Harte-Hanks Response Management
Seton Healthcare Family	Freescall Semiconductor	Hospira
	St. David's Healthcare Partnership	Girling Healthcare
	Round Rock School District	Cisco Systems
Source: City of Austin, Community Inventory		Apple

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY IN AUSTIN MSA, 2010**Wages**

- Average salaries for Austin workers indicate the existence of high-wage industries in the city. However, Austin's wages do not compete with those of east and west coast metropolitan areas.
- In Travis County, a household with one adult and one child must earn an hourly rate of about \$17.00 in order to pay typical monthly household expenses. Typical hourly wages in food preparation, personal care, farming, construction, production, and transportation and shipping are below this wage.

Commercial Real Estate Market


- The Austin region added more than 12 million square feet of total office space between 2002 and the third quarter of 2011. The construction of new office space slowed significantly in 2009; however, the third quarter of 2011 saw an uptick, with the net absorption of over 644,000 square feet of office space. Vacancy rates remain high, particularly in suburban office space. In the third quarter of 2011, office space in the Central Business District had a 13.7 percent vacancy rate and suburban office space had a 16.5 percent vacancy rate. For the entire Austin region, vacancy rates in the third quarter of 2011 for Class A office space were 18.6 percent and vacancy rates for Class B office space were 12.7 percent.
- Austin's percentage of the region's office space has dropped as more suburban spaces have been constructed.
- Most of Austin's retail growth since 1960 has occurred outside of the Central Business District, but more retail space has been leased in Central Business District since 2005 than in the last 40 years.
- Austin's share of regional retail sales has been declining over the past decade. In 2002, 63 percent of all retail sales occurred in the city; however, by 2010, this figure had dropped to 54 percent.

What Does It Mean?

Economy

- Suburban commercial and office development is diminishing Austin's position as the regional economic leader.
- The government, technology, medical, and institutional sectors form the base of Austin's economy.
- Austin's highly-educated workforce makes the city attractive to high-growth companies seeking to relocate or establish operations in the greater Austin area.
- Austin's economy continues to produce professional and skilled service jobs. However, access to these jobs is limited for many minorities and individuals with lower educational attainment.
- Austin's creative sector is key to our continued economic growth.
- There are many factors that make Austin an ideal environment for small business growth: high amounts of venture capital funding, a well-educated and young population, a creative and independent spirit that strongly favors originality, and local businesses versus national big-box retail stores.
- Austin's lower wages (relative to other major U.S. cities) creates an impediment to attracting talented workers who perceive that they can secure better pay elsewhere.
- Entrepreneurship and the ability of existing businesses to adapt to new technologies will continue to drive Austin's economy.
- Investment is needed in workforce development programs to address shortages in critical healthcare professions and blue-collar workers.

Data sources: Real Estate Center at Texas A&M University; City of Austin Community Inventory; Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization; Greater Austin Chamber of Commerce, 2009 American Community Survey; The Living Wage Project; Bureau of Economic Analysis; Bureau of Labor Statistics; CoStar Group; 2002 Economic Impact Analysis, Civic Economics for the Austin Independent Business Alliance; Business Journals.



The University of Texas at Austin, along with the City of Austin, State of Texas, AISD, and other government agencies and educational institutions are some of the largest employers in Austin.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES

We are rich in natural resources, but the effects of development and climate change put them at risk.

Key Facts/Trends

Biodiversity

- Austin lies at the boundary of four physical geographic regions: the Edwards Plateau (“Hill Country”), the Rolling Prairie, the Blackland Prairie, and the Colorado River Terraces. The city contains a variety of terrains, soils, habitats, flora, and fauna due to its location within numerous transition zones.
- The region has diverse plant and animal habitats that transition from east to west. The karst landscapes of the Balcones Escarpment and Edwards Plateau are home to many unique, endangered species of birds, salamanders, and invertebrates, some of which are listed as endangered under federal law. Austin is also located beneath the Central Flyway for North American bird migration.

Water Resources

- Austin is known for its creeks, rivers, lakes, and springs, and includes such landmarks as Barton Creek, Barton Springs, Bull Creek, Lady Bird Lake, Lake Austin, and the Colorado River. The area covered by the comprehensive plan, Austin and its extraterritorial jurisdiction, is situated in 76 watersheds within the Colorado River basin, the Brazos River basin, and the Guadalupe River basin. This area encompasses 396,395 acres out of the 983,001 total acres of the 76 area watersheds.
- The Colorado River provides the vast majority of Austin’s water supply. The City of Austin has contracts for a “firm” supply of raw water, or water that has not been treated and purified, available even during dry periods or drought to meet demand at least through 2050.
- The Edwards Aquifer, one of the most important and sensitive aquifers in Texas, feeds a number of springs in Austin, including Barton Springs and its pool. Portions of its 500-square mile recharge zone extend on a north-south axis through the western part of the city and underlie approximately 42 percent of the city’s land area. However, only 28 percent of the Barton Springs Zone is within Austin’s planning area.
- Austin has a decades-long history of regulations to protect its water supply. Current regulation includes the Drinking Water Protection Zones ordinance (approved in 1997) for watersheds that drain to Lake Travis, Lake Austin, and Barton Springs. Nearly 37 percent of the city’s land area is included in one of the three drinking water protection zones.
- Central Texas is often called “Flash Flood Alley” because of its intense storms and hilly topography with numerous creeks and wet-weather streams. The city has experienced significant flood events during almost every decade over the past 100 years.

Figure 2.6 Ecosystems in Austin

